

## **Covid Update for First UCC**

**1/12/2022**

**Submitted by Greg Lewis**

In recent discussions with our Church leadership a decision as been made to temporarily stop in-person Church services and revert to streaming media. Although this decision is never easy, it is done with concern for the health and safety of all our parishioners and staff. Our reasoning behind this decision is because of the recent surge in the Omicron variant of Covid 19 in both Cumberland County and around the Country. Just this past Monday on 1/10/22 there were 420 new cases and 2 deaths reported in Cumberland County. Our 7-day average of cases was over 400 and this is the first time since the pandemic began, that we have topped that number. There were also 163 patients hospitalized, representing a 32 person increase from the previous Friday. There were 24 adults in the ICU and 20 on ventilators. In the 4 Hershey Hospitals in our area there were 230 cases of Covid, representing a 33 patient increase just since Jan. 3. Also of note is the fact that 38% of those admitted were vaccinated and 62% were unvaccinated. Most of the seriously ill patients in the ICU and on ventilators were unvaccinated-- stressing the importance for everyone to get fully vaccinated. It has also been recommended by the CDC that everyone get boosters, since our immunity with full vaccination alone does wane over a 4-to-6-month period. As reported for Cumberland County, 73.5% of those who are 12 and older have been fully vaccinated and 32.5% have received boosters.

The Church's decision to stop in-person service is a temporary one as we continue to evaluate the number of new cases in our County as well as hospitalizations and deaths. It is our hope that if the Covid numbers improve over the next several weeks that in-person Church services can return on Sunday Feb. 6.

**I would like to thank Greg for continuing to stay on top of the pandemic situation and providing thorough and wise counsel. The decision to go virtual only for the next three weeks was not made lightly, but I believe it was the correct one. The reopening committee will continue to watch the numbers and keep the congregation informed of our reopening plans.**

**Mike Coulson, Consistory President**